

THE BOOK OF JILLIAN



CHILDREN THROUGH TIME

BY  
CAROLE B.



Visit the TARDIS Big Bang website (<http://tardisbigbang.com>) to see the art full-sized and to leave feedback for the writer and artists.

# Children Through Time III

---

by Carole B ([theatregirl79@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:theatregirl79@yahoo.co.uk))

Torchwood, New Who | PG-13 | gen | 22,000 words

*This book follows Jillian--who doesn't know she is the daughter of Ianto Jones and Toshiko Sato, having been switched as a baby--as she tries to get back some of the life she lost when her and her four friends disappeared from Cardiff in 2009 without a trace, returning twenty years later. Can her and her friends also figure out the role Torchwood plays in all of this?*

Betaed by: faithharkness and knitchick1979

Warnings: Swearing, implied mpreg

Spoilers: Through Children of Earth of Torchwood, Season 4 of Doctor Who

Notes: This is a follow-up to [Children in Time](#), and the First Two books of [Children through Time](#).

Thank you to faithharkness for being a great beta and questioning me in just the right way. Thanks to knitchick1979 and chicago\_girl\_07 for being awesome alphas, and thank you to Erin Giles, pinkfairyy727 and omnichan for the cheerleading.

Art by Becky ([arkadilotus@yahoo.com](mailto:arkadilotus@yahoo.com)) and Mella68 ([mella68@hotmail.de](mailto:mella68@hotmail.de))

## Table of Contents

Chapter 1 .....	1
Chapter 2 .....	9
Chapter 3 .....	17
Chapter 4 .....	24
Chapter 5 .....	30
Chapter 6 .....	34
Chapter 7 .....	43
Chapter 8 .....	50

# CHILDREN THROUGH TIME



## BOOK III BY CAROLE B.

## Chapter 1

Jillian gently wiped her hand along Little Alex's cheek, knocking off the crumbs from his toast. He giggled, grabbing her index finger. In the high-chair next to him, little Aimi gurgled a spit bubble at her twin brother. Rubbing her dirty hand on a dish towel, Jillian smiled at her little babies. The twins were hers, and no one would take them away from her. Every night when she laid them down to sleep and every morning when she woke up, she whispered to Alex and Aimi how she would never leave them. Never ever. Not this time.

She glanced down at the newspaper spread out on the kitchen table. Senator Eve Watson from the great state of Illinois smiled back at her. Her Evie was a United States Senator, champion for the rights of others with a family of her own, and was now the same age as her mother Jillian. Any normal mother would have felt pride at what their daughter accomplished, but for Jillian, it just made her heart feel empty.

"Morning," Nick said as he entered the kitchen and gave Jillian a peck on the cheek. Passing by the twins on his way to grabbing a cup of coffee, he dropped his suit jacket over a kitchen chair and gently touched each of their heads.

Jillian barely acknowledged him as she began reading the newspaper article stating that there had been a bomb scare in Evie's Senate offices in Washington, D.C. Apparently, police had found an actual bomb and defused it without incident. The article continued to state that some pro-life group was claiming it as their own idea. It infuriated Jillian to think that anyone who was pro-life would try so hard to take lives. It made her see red thinking how close someone came to ending her child's life over something like how they had voted on *one* bill in Congress.

Slamming the paper down on the kitchen table, she was surprised to see Nick watching her over the rim of his coffee cup. She took a couple of deep breaths, trying to calm herself down. The twins stopped their fussing and stared at her with wide eyes.

"Sorry," Jillian muttered. "Good morning," she said, absent-mindedly twisting her wedding ring around and around her finger.

"Problem?" Nick asked, taking a deep drag of his coffee.

"Idiots," Jillian stated. She smoothed out the newspaper and handed it to him, showing him the article on the bomb found in Eve's office.

Nick took the proffered paper and began to read. "Yeah, that would be a problem," Nick said. He laid the paper down on the kitchen counter and grabbed an extra piece of toast, munching on it. "But," he said, swallowing a bite. "She's fine and no one else was hurt. You shouldn't let it bother you."

"I shouldn't let it bother me?" Jillian glared at him. "Someone tried to kill my daughter!"

When Jillian's voice rose, as if on cue, Aimi started squawking, trying to figure out why her mother was screaming at Daddy. Jillian picked Aimi up out of the high chair, tucking the baby against her shoulder, cooing at her. Nick finished his coffee, placed the empty cup in the sink and brushed a couple of crumbs from his button-down shirt.

"It's not easy for you, Lord knows I understand that," Nick softly said.

He did. Nick was right about that. He was one of the few people in this world who knew her secret. He was one of the few people who knew her actual birth date, not the one David had made up for her on her false identification papers. Of course, Nick was one of the people who had helped David create her back story. Nicholas Wells was a major asset to the David Ortiz offices in more ways than were abundantly clear to the public.

Walking around the table, shushing Aimi, Jillian stopped in front of Nick. "I'm sorry," she said.

"Don't be," he replied, taking Aimi from her arms. "Want me to take them into daycare today? I know you have to run a couple of errands for David, take care of the staffing problem with the HR and stuff."

Jillian let out a sigh. David had arranged for her to work as a manager for Ortiz Industries in the New York office, so she could actually work with no questions asked. She knew it also kept her, Elizabeth and David close being involved in the same company. She got to keep her managerial and supervisory skills in good working order, and he was an employer who wouldn't ask unnecessary questions. Also, when UNIT decided to try and be nosy - which they did about once a month, in a purely perfunctory way trying to keep tabs on former alien abductions that had been dropped back into the timestream - there was no strange boss to get in her way.

She knew she had things to do, but even now she wanted to spend as much time as was possible with the twins. In the back of Jillian's mind was always the possibility that whatever happened before could happen again. She found herself living every day waiting for the other shoe to drop. Her hand reached up, tucking back the little lock of Nick's brown hair that always seemed to fall across his temple.

"I'll take them in," she stated, noticing the crestfallen look on his face.

Nick hugged Aimi to him a moment. "All right, be that way," he said as he handed his daughter back to Jillian. "There's a call from Hong Kong to Chicago I need to monitor later, so I don't know when I'll be home." Nick grabbed his suit jacket off the back of a nearby kitchen chair and rushed out the back door before Jillian could say anything else to him.

Aimi and Alex stared after their father. "Hush, you'll see him later," Jillian stated. "Time to finish getting you two dressed. Da could have helped with that." She stopped for a minute, wondering why she had called Nick Da and not Daddy. Shaking her head, she went about the rest of her morning schedule, getting the twins and herself ready for the day.

Even with two kids to care for, it didn't take Jillian long to get them dressed and headed over to One Tower. As she exited the car, the driver helped her unbuckle both carriers. Looking up the building, it

still impressed Jillian at how much this tower stood for; it represented how people could continue to live. That was part of the reason David had decided to locate the New York office of Ortiz Industries on the former site of the World Trade Center.

"I don't know how late I'll be," she told Rick, her driver. "I'll call you."

"Right. Not a problem; I'll be waiting," Rick said, tickling Alex under the chin. He hurried around the car and drove away. David paid the drivers who took care of her and Elizabeth handsomely so they would always be at their beck and call. Add to that how customized the cars were and, well, it was good job.

She hurried into the building, nudging her chest towards the guard so he could see the ID on the lapel of her suit jacket. Dana, the usual morning guard, unclipped the ID and scanned it for Jillian so she wouldn't have to struggle with two baby carriers, her laptop bag, purse and the children's duffel. Dana clipped it back on to her lapel as the access button lit up.

"Have a good morning, Miss Marsh," Dana said, waving at the children who just gurgled back at her.

Jillian wondered just what David had done to allow her access to One Tower without having to always go through the metal detector and the other scanners as well. Maybe she didn't want to know and be an accomplice. Jillian hurried over to the elevator and took it up to the 33rd floor where Ortiz Industries was located.

Detouring past her office, Jillian went straight to the small daycare. As she pushed open the outer door with her hip, Anna came over and grabbed Aimi's carrier from her hands. Anna held open the second set of doors and ushered Jillian into the chaos that was already evident at 8:00am. Little Billy Granger nearly knocked her over as he ran past, howling like a wolf.

"Billy! Stop running," Anna admonished him. "Sorry about that," she said to Jillian. "All these kids seem interested in lately is The Tales of The Moon books. If one more kid thinks they are going to turn into a werewolf and rule the city, I think I might scream."

Jillian giggled. "At least they're reading," she stated, untangling the strap for the duffel from her purse. "Kids need something. I remember growing up reading the *Superfudge* books, wishing my older brother was that cool, and glad my younger brother was not that insane."

"*Superfudge*?"

"Beverly Cleary. Along with *Beezus and Ramona*, *Ramona Quimby - Age 8*, *Henry Higgins the Great*, *Freckle Juice*, *Ramona the Pest*--"

"Oh! Those. Those are old series," Anna chuckled. "You must have had old fashioned parents."

"You could say that," Jillian mumbled.

She leaned down, kissing Alex on the forehead, smirking as he blew a spit bubble on her cheek. She wiped her cheek with the back of her hand and then moved over and kissed Aimi on her cheek. Aimi

reached up and grabbed a chunk of Jillian's hair and tugged. Jillian untangled Aimi's fingers and reluctantly pulled away.

"All right, you have some crackers and teething rings for them, just in case. Their blankies from Aunty Beth are in there as well--"

"I know," Anna replied, scooping Alex up. "It's been nearly the same thing almost every day." She made a face at Alex, making him giggle. "Hasn't it, my big, strong man?"

Jillian waved good-bye and slid out the door before the twins could notice she had left. They were pretty good being away from their parents and were very social, luckily.

Settling into her office chair, Jillian let out a sigh. How had her life brought her here? Managing a major office and international corporation, married again, with two new babies and barely knowing her own daughter.

Three meetings and a problem with the McCaskey files later, Jillian was more than ready for some lunch. She grabbed a yogurt and salad from the little shoppe on the second floor of the building and headed back upstairs to have lunch with her kids. After dodging a handful of baby pudding, Jillian reluctantly went back to work.

She was perusing an email from David about a new hire he was transferring to New York when her phone buzzed. She absently picked it up, barely paying any attention to her secretary Jen since she recognized it as the inter-office ringtone.

"Ms. Marsh, Dana called up from the lobby," Jen said, her voice calm and efficient. "There's an Alice Moretti looking for access to Ortiz Industries, but she's not on the access or guest lists. Dana said the woman showed her an Ortiz Foundation ID card."

Jillian let out a sigh. "The Ortiz Foundation is the charitable arm of this company. Did Dana say who sent Miss Moretti here?"

"Elizabeth Murphy."

"I'll take care of it," Jillian said. "Give me a minute. Tell Dana I'll be down there to check out this person. I'll either be escorting her up here myself or I want to see who's trying to get into this company." She hung up the phone receiver and picked up her mobile, dialing Elizabeth's personal number.

"Hello? What's up?" Elizabeth could barely be heard over little Grace screaming in the background.

"Everything all right?"

"Grace had a little accident and I need to have the doctor come and check out her leg. She's had so many problems since she was born, my little girl, and they finally think the thin blood she has is from

that, but she also banged up her arm playing, and has this swelling blood blister. Things have been so hectic--"

"You need to take care of her," Jillian said, interrupting her friend. "I just need a quick question answered then. Do you have an Alice Moretti working for you?"

"Yeah. She does our on-site research of the groups that want money for their projects. She finds out if things are up to standard and if they are going to do what they say they want to do with the money. She's real good at getting the bad ones to crack."

"Good. Is there any reason she should be in my lobby needing to get up here?"

"Shoot! I forgot to call you. Yeah, her laptop broke or something. She can tell you all about it, and since she was in Jersey, I figured it would be best for her to go to our IT there and we'll sort out the paperwork later."

"I'll need access to the Foundation records to verify it's her."

"Normal password."

"Thanks, talk to you later."

Jillian hung up her mobile and brought up the internal database for Ortiz Industries. She went to a side file and saw the internal files on the employees of the Ortiz Foundation, which numbered at five. When it asked for a password prompt, she input '6-8-2-3-4-7' and it came up for her. She scanned past two employees until she came to Alice Moretti. Jillian scanned the woman's file, looked up her security question, and memorized her face.

Heading downstairs to the main lobby of One Tower, Jillian tapped out an unknown rhythm on the side of her leg with her fingers. Alice looked like someone Jillian had seen at one point in her life, but that didn't mean much; she had met and seen so many people in so many situations - work, retail, schools, vacations - it could be anyone. Eventually, she would figure it out, that she knew.

"Miss Marsh, glad you could come down and check on this," Dana said, acknowledging her out loud so the woman who waited on the other side of the security barrier knew as well.

Alice Moretti turned and looked at Jillian, her eyes hard. Her hair was shoulder length and curly. There were hints of grey, but she did manage to maintain her chestnut locks despite being nearly sixty years old. The woman had a figure and held herself well.

"Mrs. Moretti?"

"That would have been my mother," Alice said with a soft British accent. "You can call me Alice. There was an accident with my laptop while I was looking into this children's group in New Jersey. I was accosted by this brassy redhead and the computer went flying across the room. I was told by Elizabeth to just come in and IT would fix it here rather than having to go back to Chicago."

"Sounds like Beth," Jillian stated. "Tell me, what is your mother's name?"

"Lucia."

Jillian turned to Dana, shooting the older woman a smile. "She's good, just a little miscommunication. I'll sign for her," Jillian stated.

Dana handed Alice her IDs back as Jillian took the datapad and magnetic pen and signed the release form for admittance to the Tower. She waited as Alice came through the metal detectors and recollected her belongings. They waited for the elevator together.

"So? What made you work for the Ortiz Foundation?"

"I liked what they were doing, and I liked the fact that they put an emphasis on helping children," Alice stated, watching the elevator numbers. She glanced sideways at Jillian, looking her up and down. "How does someone as young as you manage a whole office for Ortiz Industries in a place like One Tower in New York?"

"I've known David and Elizabeth for years," Jillian replied. The other woman raised an eyebrow and looked back to the now-open elevator. Both women entered. "But, I'm good at what I do," Jillian stated.

"I would hope you are," Alice succinctly said. "Although, if you are such good friends with Elizabeth, I'm surprised you moved away, especially with new children of your own."

"How do you know all that to even assume anything?"

"I make it a habit to know who I work for, on all levels," Alice stated as the doors opened to the Ortiz Industries offices. "I have been taken advantage of in the past, and I'm never letting that happen again."

"Sounds like man trouble," Jillian huffed.

"You could say that," Alice said as she followed Jillian down the hall to IT. "But he'll never hurt the ones I love ever again, even if I have to get rid of him myself, for good."

Jillian stopped and turned to look at Alice. Someone had really ripped this woman's heart apart at some point in her life, and even now it was hard for her to let go. Jillian understood. If she could ever figure out who was responsible for what happened to her and her friends in Cardiff all those years ago, they would wish to whatever god they prayed to that she never had. Even that pro-life group who claimed to have set the bomb would find a surprise in their computer systems that night.

"Well, here we are," Jillian stated, letting Alice in the main doors of IT using her ID card. "John here will take good care of you," she said, coming up to John's desk as the young man looked up.

"What's up?" John peered down his glasses at them.

"A little laptop problem," Alice interjected, pulling a cracked computer case from her bag with several wires hanging out the divide, showing off mangled metal.

"I thought you said you just had a run-in with a redhead from Jersey?" Jillian was appalled at the state of the computer.

"She-devil would be more like it," Alice sniffed.

"I'll see what I can do," John said, gingerly taking the broken laptop from Alice.

"If they can't repair it, come and see me and I will requisition a new one for you," Jillian said to Alice and then left before she actually saw John cry over the state of the motherboard.

The afternoon flew by, and Jillian found herself rushing down the hall to the nursery. She wasn't headed home yet, but it didn't seem fair that Anna should have to stay late just because of her. The twins were usually sleepy at this time of day, so they should be fine hanging out in her office until she could leave.

"I'm so sorry, Anna," Jillian said as she swept into the daycare.

"Not a problem," Anna replied, stuffing Aimi's blanket into the duffel. "They've been little angels all day."

"I wish I could take you home with me then," Jillian joked as she threw the duffel over her shoulder and picked up a carrier in each hand.

Anna chuckled, flipping her long dark hair behind her ear. "Anytime," she said, grabbing her own coat.

"You have a show opening tonight, right? Off-Broadway?"

"Off-Broadway's the only thing that will cast me."

"Oh hush! You'll do well. Break a leg," Jillian called out to Anna as the younger woman held the door open for her.

"Have a good night! Bye Alex, bye Aimi," Anna said as she sprinted down the hall for the elevators.

Jillian was busy making faces at her children as she waltzed into her office, only to stop dead in her tracks as she crossed the threshold and saw Alice looking out the windows of her office at the New York skyline. As soon as Jillian made the slightest noise, Alice spun around like a skittish colt.

"Can I help you?" Jillian asked, her voice harsh, her fists gripping the baby carriers.

"Sorry," Alice said, coming from behind Jillian's desk. "Right, John said 'all hope was lost forever and ever' on the laptop, so I was wondering if I could requisition a new one to write up my preliminary findings on the Children's Group Home."

"Okay," Jillian said, walking around her office opposite of Alice. She reluctantly put the carriers down behind her desk, never out of reach, herself between them and Alice. "What were you doing behind my desk?"

"Oh, the view got to me while I was waiting. I don't spend much time in big cities if I can help it," Alice responded.

Jillian pulled up the requisition form and started clacking away on the keyboard without even sitting down. "Right," Jillian mouthed. "Because you've never, ever been in a big city working for the Ortiz Foundation."

"Not if I have the choice," Alice coolly stated. "And while we're throwing accusations around, do you think I'm going to steal your children? I mean them no harm, and if I ever hurt a child, God can strike me dead. I would rather go hand-to-hand with an alien I know I won't win against than see another child hurt."

"Yeah, well, I have my reasons for being protective, Miss Moretti. I've already lost one child in my lifetime, ripped from me by powers that I could not fight. Forgive me if I'm a little protective of the two children I am now lucky to have." Jillian printed out the form on bonded paper and held it out to Alice. "That department is gone for the day, but I will put you on the access list for tomorrow so you can get into the building."

"Thank you," Alice flatly stated, taking the paper from Jillian. She looked as if she was going to say another word, but instead turned and left.

When she could no longer hear Alice's footsteps down her corridor, Jillian finally slumped in her seat. She pulled up access to the internal building cameras and tracked Alice all the way out of the building and off the property. There was something about that woman that seemed so familiar and yet--

Jillian looked down as Alex began to fuss. She unbuckled him from his carrier and picked him up, gently rubbing his back. "Don't worry, love, Mother will never let you go."

## Chapter 2

Jillian felt awful. She was exhausted and her eyes did not want to open, but she had things to take care of. Yawning, she rolled out of bed and stumbled into the kitchen. She was surprised to see Nick up and done eating breakfast, the twins dressed and babbling to each other as well. She grabbed a cup of coffee and sipped at it, noticing how Nick was dressed in jeans and a DePaul sweatshirt instead of his usual office attire. This was taking casual Friday to a whole new level.

"Bit of an overkill, don't you think, sweetheart?" Nick said as he tossed the newspaper across the table at her.

Jillian glanced down at the front page, noticing how the feds had arrested the pro-life group after a tip had come in highlighting their illegal money trail. The person who had tipped them off had laid everything out, including the money they had received from a mafia family.

"Whatever do you mean? I think they got what they deserved," Jillian replied, gulping down her coffee. "And so will the people who actually set the bomb." Jillian stifled a yawn.

"You were up late," Nick stated. "Late enough that you were sloppy with your e-trail. Good thing I was up taking care of little Aimi's earache."

"Thank you for that," Jillian stated, dumping the rest of her coffee into the sink.

"Right," Nick said, getting up and moving behind Jillian without even giving her a kiss on the cheek. He picked up the baby's medicine from the counter and tipped some into the little dropper. "Hadn't you better get dressed for work?"

"What about you?"

"I'm not going to work today."

"I can stay home with the twins if they aren't feeling well."

"No. You will go to work," Nick stated, clenching the dropper in his fist.

"I can stay and take care of them. They are my children--"

"They are my children as well!" Nick turned and glared at her. "I'm sorry, but they will not disappear into the ether if you go to work and let me stay home alone with *my* children."

Jillian just stared at him. He was one of the few people who should know how she felt, and here he was mocking her. "And Evie was supposed to be safe talking to me every day and staying with my parents while I was on vacation in Cardiff!" She could feel the rage building inside of her.

"And she was! She's still alive and has a life of her own. How is that a bad thing?"

"I wasn't there! My daughter is my own age, and I missed her entire childhood into adulthood! She is married and has a child! I don't know her any more." Jillian grabbed at the kitchen counter, her fingers clenching around the edge. Her knuckles were white.

"Things could have been worse, much worse and you know that," Nick stated, trying to control his breathing. Jillian knew he was close to losing it. His nostrils did this flaring thing when he got truly upset.

"Really? How?"

"You don't want me to answer that."

"No," Jillian said, coming chest to chest with her husband, "tell me how they could have been worse."

Nick took a breath, staring down his wife.

Jillian didn't back down.

"She could have grown up with a vindictive woman like you as her mother."

Jillian felt as if Nick had punched her in the head and her body splattered out through her feet. Her blood ran ice cold. "What do you mean?" she stammered out.

"I know what else you did last night."

"They deserved it."

"They deserved to get caught, but not what you did."

"If the feds had the same camera views of her congressional office as we have access to, then why didn't they arrest the people who actually set the bomb? We've been tapping into the camera feed for a year to watch over Evie. Tell me why the feds let them get away?" She stood there, her hands on her hips, seething. Why didn't Nick see she had been justified in protecting her daughter?

"The feds were on their way to arresting the offending party when they got word of a fire at the group's base. Police would have arrested the bomb maker and the guy who set it except they died in the fire." Nick picked up Aimi as she began to squeal, tugging on her left ear. "You wouldn't happen to know how that fire started? Would you?" He held Aimi close to him.

She shook her head in shock. The police had known who was behind it and were biding their time. She began to rub Aimi's back. "They got what they deserved. Who knew the cops were on their way?"

"They didn't kill anyone!"

"They tried to."

"We don't know that."

"We don't know for certain they didn't want to kill anyone," Jillian stated. "Anyway, the fire was never my intention. I was just going to overload their system to keep them in one place long enough--"

"Long enough to do what?"

"Never mind." She put her hands out to take Aimi from Nick, but he pulled back, holding the now crying child to him as Aimi tugged on her ear even more heartily.

"You need to go to work. I'll take care of my children, including the daughter who actually needs a parent right now." Nick turned his back on Jillian, trying to soothe poor Aimi as Alex began to cry as well, wondering why his sister was crying so much.

Jillian wanted to slap Nick, but fought the urge to do so. She slowly stepped back and then hurried out of the kitchen for the bedroom. Flopping down on the bed, she nestled her face into her hands and cried. Nick couldn't treat her like this! She had every right to protect her children. Protecting Evie is what had made her stay away despite being back for years.

At first she didn't know how Evie would have taken it, seeing her mother looking exactly the same as she had over 20 years before. Then it had become a question of none of them exactly sure of what had taken them and what Torchwood was, or what it had to do with their abduction in 2009. David had found out some info on Torchwood, including one in the U.S., but no answers were forthcoming, especially since they also needed to hide their true identities after having been out of the time-stream for too long. It had come down to her keeping Evie safe, keeping her daughter from becoming a target of the ones who wanted to get rid of them.

She had also never planned on falling in love again. Tom had been the only one for her, or so she thought. When she got word that he was MIA in Iraq, it was being pregnant with Evie that kept her going. Knowing that something so small and innocent depended on her for life was the only thing that kept her from truly going off the deep end. Keeping Evie safe was still the thing that anchored her, even in this life.

Then came David and Nick. David had hired Nick to help them cover up the paper trail of their real identities so David could concentrate on the business. The money Ortiz Industries generated had provided them with enough freedom these years. Nick had even helped her set up surveillance of Evie that even the feds couldn't trace. It turned out she and Nick made a good team, and for David to have hired him for this job meant that he was trustworthy. That all eventually led to them hooking up one night, and things just moved at warp speed from there.

Jillian did love Nick, she truly did. It was times like this, when he questioned her intentions, that she wondered if he would ever fully grasp what disappearing for so many years, what losing her family and her friends, had done to her. Even now, two of her close friends had not been returned to them. Try as they might, none of them had been able to track down Samantha and Lynnae. Jillian said a silent prayer to whatever god would listen that somewhere the two of them were safe, if not still in Cardiff,

then somewhere. Heck, she would even accept it if they had even become part of the Soul Society, if it meant that they finally had some answers.

Brushing the tears from her face, Jillian shakily rose up and hurried to the toilet to freshen up. As she dressed for work, she decided to wear a tie that day. Her fingers deftly tied the knot and as she straightened the tie against her top, Jillian felt a calmness come over her. Nick wouldn't shake her. She would take care of her family, no matter what it took - and that even included insolent husbands. Pushing the thoughts of Evie, Cardiff and Torchwood to the back of her mind, she hurried into the hall.

She knocked on the closed door to the twins' bedroom, hearing giggles from behind the door as she made out Nick singing to them. Nick didn't stop singing and he didn't open the door. Not wanting to fight again, she blew two kisses at the door and said 'bye' silently.

Work seemed to drag on and on that day. Simple tasks suddenly took five times as long to complete, and she often found her mind wandering, staring at the clouds and buildings outside her window. None of them had been back to Cardiff since they had disappeared; perhaps they should take a trip there. Being in the same place could jog their memories.

*"I'm a little wary leaving Evie alone," Jillian said, looking at a simple red dress in the shop.*

*"Come on! You don't have to pay for the trip, and Evie will be with your parents," Elizabeth stated as she flipped through dress after dress on the shopping rack.*

*"What if something happens?"*

*"Like what? You fall madly in love with a gorgeous man and have to start liking rugby so you two have something to talk about?"*

*Jillian giggled. "Exactly!"*

*Elizabeth stopped fussing over the clothes they were supposed to be shopping for and turned to Jillian.*

*"We're just going on a vacation. We're not going to a war zone. You'll see Eve again." Elizabeth gave her a quick hug. "Now, should we even bother looking at bikinis or will it be too cold?"*

*"I bet David wouldn't mind seeing the bikini."*

*"And what would Greg say?" Elizabeth picked up a red vest, looking at it. "If I walked into the hotel room buck naked, I don't think David would notice."*

There was a knock on her office door and Jillian swiveled around in the chair to see who it was. She inwardly groaned as she saw Alice Moretti darkening her doorway.

"Can I help you?" Jillian asked, standing up behind her desk.

"I came back to pick up the new laptop," Alice stated, her hand moving up and rubbing the back of her neck. "Yesterday was a bit rough. You seem like a woman who could use someone to talk to."

"What? Are you psychic now?"

"No. I just learned to read people from both my parents. That's why I'm good at what I do." Alice took a step into her office. "I thought we could grab a cup of coffee or tea."

Jillian thought over the proposal a moment. Maybe a break from everything that had been going wrong that day was what she needed. She shook her head yes. "We could go to the break room down the hall."

"Actually, I saw a little coffee shop down the street," Alice said. "Neutral territory, so to speak."

"All right," Jillian replied.

She tossed her coat over her arm and grabbed her purse. Following Alice out of the office, neither woman said a word until they had settled down at a little table in the back of the coffee shop, a mug in front of each of them. Little pleasantries had been exchanged with the waitress, but neither woman said a thing to each other. Minutes ticked by in companionable silence.

Jillian took a sip of her latte and looked Alice up and down. "So? What do you think we should talk about?"

"You seemed very defensive about your children, and you mentioned losing a child," Alice said, her hands wrapped around her mug of tea. "Why don't we start there?"

"You pull no punches," Jillian replied. "Straight to the point."

"I've learned in my life you can't hide behind half-truths, they will come back to hurt you in the end."

"Spoken like someone who's been hurt a lot in life," Jillian stated, taking another sip of her latte.

"Perhaps," Alice replied. She looked Jillian in the eyes. "I lost a child of my own, killed by someone I knew. They thought it was for the greater good, but I didn't give a damn, he was *my* son."

"I'm sorry."

"Don't be. I buried him over two decades ago. I've learned to accept it. I'll just never fully forgive the man who took Stephen away from me."

"You shouldn't," Jillian said, her jaw hard. "At least you know who to blame."

"You don't?"

"Not really." Jillian's fingertip ran along the brim of her cup. "Eve was five. I was the one taken away from her. She had been with her grandparents." Jillian let out a little chuckle, trying not to cry. "My

father loved her so much. He used to kid me that with his granddaughter, he got a second chance to be a proper dad. You see, Eve's dad was gone."

"What happened?"

"I was away in Cardiff..." Jillian stopped herself from saying too much. "It's all a bit rather complicated."

"Cardiff?"

"Yeah."

"What happened in Cardiff?"

"Ever been there?"

"I'm familiar with it."

"I kind of disappeared for a bit, and Eve grew up without me."

"You disappeared?" Alice leaned back in her chair, eyes focused so hard on Jillian she could feel them boring into her. "She grew up? Do you mean to tell me she's still alive?"

"Yes."

"Have you gone to see her?"

"Like I said, it's complicated."

"Your daughter is still alive?"

"Yeah, but my family doesn't exactly know I'm alive." Jillian's hand quickly covered her mouth. She couldn't believe she just told a stranger that. What the hell was wrong with her? Why was she telling this woman this?

"Why not?"

"I thought I was protecting them." Jillian found herself really hoping this woman understood.

"I know what it's like, wanting to protect your child."

"I imagine you would, having lost yours."

Alice seemed to be staring into Jillian. "Do you love her?"

"With every fiber of my being. She's my daughter, for God's sake!"

"Then you need to find her and tell her."

"I told you; it's really, really complicated."

"Believe me, I know complicated, especially when it comes to family."

"Yeah? And what if the child and parent look the exact same age? Is that complicated enough for you?" Jillian sank back into her chair. Why did she keep talking? What was it about this woman that kept making her open her mouth? It's like she felt a link with Alice she couldn't fully comprehend.

Alice's face was full of shock. Jillian watched as she slowly put a mask back up and took a deep breath. "What happened to you in Cardiff?" Alice asked.

"I don't really know. It's all a blur to me. I can't remember," Jillian said, letting out a shuddering breath. Maybe she needed this, perhaps Jillian needed to tell someone new, someone she could still shock with the strange events of her life. "All I know is that I hear the name Torchwood in my nightmares." She looked at Alice. The older woman looked like she wanted to run. "What is it?"

"Torchwood..."

Jillian reached out to Alice, grabbing her hand. "You know it? You know about Torchwood? Please tell me I'm not crazy."

"You're not crazy, but I must be," Alice said, wrenching her hand away from Jillian's. Alice quickly stood up, her coat clenched in her fist. "Torchwood did exist, still sort of does."

"What can you tell me about it?"

"Nothing! I have to go." Alice went to leave, but stopped, leaning over Jillian, "Do you love your daughter?"

"Yes. With all my heart."

"Go to her and let her know you are still alive."

"What if she doesn't understand?"

"Then let her tell you that. Just promise me you won't lose a child because of Torchwood." There was a fire in Alice's eyes.

"I don't know what Torchwood did to me."

"Promise me." Alice looked at her with the same intensity her older sister used to get right before she made Jillian pinky swear on her gerbil's life.

"I promise." Even Jillian could hear her voice shake.

With that, Alice took off for the door of the coffee shop and hurried outside as it began to drizzle. Jillian watched the rain, her mind trying to sort out what had just happened. She tried to sip the latte before it grew cold, but her hands kept shaking. Alice Moretti knew about Torchwood, but refused to

talk about it. But, Alice was right about one thing: Jillian loved Eve and missed her so much it broke her heart.

At first, she hadn't contacted her family because it had been so long, and she wanted to protect Eve. None of them knew what had happened to them in Cardiff 25 years ago, nor how it would affect their families; especially after Elizabeth had been abducted again, and UNIT wanted to *study* them, and they still seemed in trouble. Four years had passed since Jillian had been back. Maybe it was time to see her daughter again.

She left a tip for the waitress and grabbed her bag and coat, pulling an umbrella from her purse. Hurrying out into the sudden downpour, Jillian darted back to the office. She was only going to grab some personal things and head home. She knew what she had to do.

## Chapter 3

"Are you crazy?" Nick shouted at her.

"Keep your voice down, you'll wake the twins," Jillian admonished him as she packed up her laptop bag.

"I don't care," Nick said, grabbing her by the shoulder and turning her to look at him. "I've been trying to get you to go to Evie for months and now because some fucking stranger tells you to, you decide to do it?"

"She's not a stranger. She works for the Foundation and knew about Torchwood--"

"Which should raise a hundred red flags! You and I both know how elusive Torchwood is, and the fact that she knew the name, much less seemed to know *about* Torchwood, doesn't seem odd to you?"

"Call it women's intuition or something. I don't know why, but I trust her," Jillian said, walking over to the dresser and grabbing her purse.

"I don't think we should trust Alice Moretti at all. I did some digging, and so did David--"

"You told David?"

"This woman works for him, why not?"

"I didn't tell you to do that!"

"Pardon me, I was worried about my wife's safety, her child's safety and the safety of our children," Nick yelled at her across the bed.

In the other room, Aimi began to cry. Jillian tossed her purse on the bed and shouldered past Nick to the twins' room. Coming in, she saw Aimi sitting up in her crib, her little fists smashed against her stomach. Alex was awake and just watching his sister. Jillian scooped up her younger daughter, cuddling Aimi to her chest.

"Hush now, Mummy's here and she's never going to leave you," Jillian whispered.

"Except when she gets arrested trying to talk to big sis," Nick said from the doorway. He leaned against the doorjamb, arms folded across his chest. "I don't think you should trust anything Alice Moretti says."

"Why is that?"

"David and I found out some things. Her mother's name was Lucia Moretti. According to the U.K.'S encrypted database, Lucia Moretti worked for Torchwood Cardiff. She also said she buried a son. According to records filed after the date, her son Stephen died during the 456 crisis, or so it became known when the government finally opened some of the records."

"So?"

"I lived through that crisis. I was ten at the time. It was scary shit, but what made it remarkable was that no child died during it. If no child died, how did Stephen die?"

Jillian paced the floor as Aimi began to quiet down. "I don't know," Jillian said softly.

"Exactly. And after she told you all this, Alice returned to the Ortiz Industries offices, got the laptop and took off. David hasn't been able to track her down. She even checked out of the hotel." Nick walked over, tucking Alex in as the boy fell back asleep. He then made his way around the room to Jillian and took Aimi from her arms, cradling his daughter against his shoulder. "But do whatever it is you think you need to do."

"I have to see Evie."

"You can see her every day."

"No. What if I took Alex and Aimi away from you and you could never hold them again? Never look them in the eyes? I have to touch my daughter, even if it's the last time. I will go in there knowing this could be the last time I will see her face-to-face." She walked up behind Nick, her hands on his shoulders. "I have to do this."

"I know," Nick choked out, not looking at her. "I don't want to lose you. I don't want the twins to lose you because you must do this."

"I don't intend on disappearing."

"But things just seem to happen to you," Nick said, turning his head back to her. "I know I would miss you."

Jillian walked around Nick, plucking Aimi from his arms. She put her younger daughter down into her crib. "Pardon me, sweetheart, while I do something inappropriate to your father." Aimi gurgled, but didn't cry out as Jillian grabbed Nick by the undershirt and pulled him in to her. She kissed him hard. "I do love you. I love you so very much," Jillian said as her hands ran down his chest and under his shirt, around to his back. Jillian kissed him again, her tongue pushing forward.

Nick kissed her back and Jillian buried her head into his chest. "You should get going," Nick said, kissing the top of her head. "Were you going to see Tom first?"

"I was planning on it."

"Then you should get driving before you hit rush hour." He pulled back, tugging a set of keys from his pocket. "Rick left one of the cars downstairs in the garage."

Jillian took the keys from his hand and tucked them into the pocket of her trousers. She knew she would be safe from any extraterrestrial attacks using one of the company cars; David made sure of that. One thing David had found out since he had been dropped back into the time-stream - partly

thanks to UNIT - was that there was some kind of tracking device in their blood that also was inherited by their children. Why it had happened, they were unsure; but David used the influence of Ortiz Industries to make sure they were protected. Their flats, condos, businesses and cars were interwoven with technology to mask the tracking signature in their blood.

Nick held Jillian, running his hands up and down her back. "If you are intent on doing this, you have to get going." Nick gave her a gentle kiss on the lips.

"I know," Jillian stated. She let out a sigh, disentangling her body from his. Leaning down over Aimi's crib, she stroked her daughter's cheek and gave Aimi a kiss on the head. "Be good, sweetheart." She walked over to Alex's crib and ran her fingers through his soft curls and gave him a kiss on the head. "I'll be back."

"I hope you will," Nick stated, sidling up next to Jillian. "I'll keep open a connection to your laptop."

"If something happens, the twins can't lose you, either."

"I'll keep an eye on your back for you. If something happens, I'll close the network and shut it down, and then I'll get David on the phone. You won't be alone," Nick stated, a hard edge to his voice.

"All right," Jillian said. Without looking at Nick, she hurried out of the twins' bedroom and tossed a spare set of clothes in her duffel bag. She slipped on a pair of ballet slippers and tossed on a cardigan jacket, wrapping it tight around her.

Grabbing up the laptop bag and duffel, Jillian tossed them over her shoulder. She slid her purse into the laptop bag and headed for the hallway. Passing the twins' door, Jillian could see the nightlight peeking out through a crack in the door. Inside the room, she could hear Nick whispering to Aimi as their daughter tried to talk back to him. Jillian smiled wanly at the door and headed out of the flat.

Jillian gripped the doorknob tightly. When she walked through this door again, their lives would be changed, hopefully for the better. Letting out a sigh she could feel in her feet, Jillian exited to the elevators and headed down to the garage. Tossing her bags into the back seat, Jillian started the car and headed into the pre-dawn light.

-----

Six hours later, Jillian found herself walking amongst the tombstones at Arlington National Cemetery. It had been years, even in the years Jillian had lived, since she walked this path. The last time Jillian had been to Arlington was in 2008. The cemetery had not changed much. It was ironic that this was the one place that hadn't changed over the years. Even Jillian, David and Elizabeth had changed after what had happened to them.

Finding the gravesite, Jillian knelt next to her first husband, Thomas Watson. She reverently ran her fingertips over his name. Slumping back, sitting on her heels, Jillian hung her head, her long dark hair falling forward and hiding her face.

"Oh God, Tom. What's happened to my life?" The wind rushed through the grass next to her knees. "I failed you. I failed Evie. I let her go." Wind whipped Jillian's hair around her head, knocking the tears off her cheeks. "I'm going to face her again. I hope you'll be watching over us. I hope she will at least listen to me and not turn away from me. Oh God, what am I going to say to her?"

Jillian swore she heard Tom chiding her in the back of her mind. It amazed her how clearly she could still hear his voice. She almost wished Eve had gotten to meet her father once in her lifetime. She ran her fingers through the soft blades of grass reminiscing on the last time she had held Tom in her arms. Jillian was two months pregnant with Eve and had just found out. Tom held her in his arms, nothing - not even a stitch of clothing - separating them from each other. Both of them wished the world could stop turning and they could stay that way forever. Instead, Tom was nearly late the next morning and almost missed shipping out. Jillian sort of wished he had.

At the same time, she was glad he had been in Iraq when he was. If he hadn't been, there were a dozen men who would have died instead. The military had been in his family's blood for generations: two great-great-grandfathers had served in the Civil War, one on either side; Tom's grandfather served in the Air Force during World War II; Tom's father served during Vietnam in the army; Tom opted for the Marines while an older brother went into the Navy SEALs. Both Watson boys lost their lives doing what they loved.

If she scrunched her eyes closed and concentrated on nothing at all, blocking out the rest of the world, Jillian swore she could feel Tom's hand brush along her cheek and his lips press gently on hers. She cried. For the first time in years, Jillian cried.

"I miss you," she said to the air, wiping away the tears with the back of her hand. "I wish I never had to give you up. I wish I still had my mundane life back and our daughter got to grow up like a normal child with a mother and a father." She sucked back the sobs, feeling them catch in her throat. "I wish I could be half as brave as you were."

Jillian kissed her fingertips and pressed them against the cool stone. Shakily pushing herself up to her feet, Jillian brushed off the knees of her trousers. Standing in front of Tom's grave, she closed her eyes, feeling the wind hug her. Jillian nodded her head in silent agreement and made her way out of Arlington National Cemetery.

-----

About an hour had passed since Jillian had holed herself up in the back booth of a small coffee shop about a mile from the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. She sat looking at her laptop. Once she had settled in, Jillian hacked into the server that monitored the security cameras in Eve's senatorial offices. Jillian took a breath and hit several keys, "accidentally" making the feds aware that someone was watching the system. She continued to hack in, making it blatantly obvious even to an amateur that the Senator's computers were being looked at by an outside source. Jillian closed out the network after letting the tracer program find her location, and sank back into the hard cushions of the coffee shop booth. Now, all she had to do was wait.

She took a sip of her coffee, trying to steady her nerves. Even if the police arrested her, she should still be able to see Eve. The only thing Jillian prayed for was that it was not UNIT that came for her. If UNIT came, Jillian had no chance of ever seeing her daughter again. Tucking the cardigan tighter around her body, Jillian let out a sigh, her head down. Staring into the coffee remnants, all she saw was a black abyss.

A shadow fell across her table and Jillian looked up, her breath catching in her throat, her heart dropping to the floor. Standing in front of her, arms folded across her chest, was a grown-up Evie. Jillian's mouth felt dry and full of sand as she saw the recognition pass across Eve's hazel eyes. Eve's hands dropped down to her sides as she leaned over her mother. Her very grown-up daughter was in a navy blue suit with a purple blouse and had long chestnut hair like Tom's.

"Who the hell are you?" Eve asked, ice in her voice.

Jillian tried to calm herself, her palms flat on the table in front of her. "Perhaps you should sit down."

"I don't take orders from anyone. I'll stand, thank you very much. Who are you?"

"You wouldn't believe me if I told you."

"Try me. You'd be surprised at what I would believe."

"I really doubt you would believe this; even I don't want to believe it."

"Listen, whomever or whatever you are, I do not have the time for this. The feds weren't too keen on my coming here myself, except for the fact that I wanted to look into the eyes of the asshole who's been trying to hurt my people and my family. The police are all around us, even in places you wouldn't think to look. All I have to do is give them one signal and you will find yourself locked up in a federal penitentiary, praying you would be allowed to see the light of day."

"I'm not the one who's been trying to hurt you."

"Really? You're doing a damn good job of it right now."

"What do you mean?"

"How did you find information on my mother? Why go to this length, even with technology, to do this?" Eve's voice was harsh as she jabbed a finger towards Jillian.

"It's no charade. I am your mother." Jillian sucked in a deep breath of air, afraid of what she just did.

"You can't be my mother. She's dead." Eve's face seemed to turn to stone.

"No she's not. It's me, sweetheart. Your father died before you were born. I was away on vacation in Cardiff when something happe--"

"Anyone could look up that information."

"You're the one who named my laptop Oso. You had a favorite teddy bear named Kero. You always wore your favorite nightgown, which was Petey Penguin that your Aunt Beth gave you, and she gave me a matching set of Petey Penguin pajamas. I wore them every night we were gone, knowing you wore yours. Aunt Sammy gave you the complete set of Roald Dahl books that you read constantly. Do you still have them? You used to steal Uncle David's sushi, and actually eat it. You one time gave Aunt Lynnae a heart attack when you spilled apple juice all over her computer after you somehow got your sippie cup to actually open."

"Maybe I had better sit down," Eve mumbled, sinking into the booth on the opposite side of the table. Eve stared at Jillian, silently shaking her head. "It can't be."

Jillian smiled weakly. "It is."

"How? How is this possible? Where were you?"

"Maybe we should talk a little more privately."

"But why did they track you down as hacking into my office systems?"

"Because I was. I have been. I've been keeping watch over you since I came back." Jillian reached out a hand across to Eve.

Eve stood up quickly, pulling away. "I need tests done. I need to know it's really you."

"Whatever you need me to do."

"You need to go to UNIT headquarters and they'll do body scans and DNA tests, along with a brain scan to make sure you actually are Jillian Marsh."

Jillian felt as if a bucket of ice had been dumped into her bloodstream. Eve wanted her to walk into UNIT headquarters voluntarily. The one place she didn't want to go, her daughter insisted she go to prove who she was.

"Are you sure I just couldn't get the test done at John Hopkins or somewhere else?"

"UNIT has the best technology there is when it comes to things like that. And pardon me, but you haven't aged since the last time I saw you. I want to make sure you are actually human among other things." Eve clasped her hands in front of her, staring Jillian up and down.

"It's just... If I don't have to deal with UNIT, things would be so much better."

"Why are you so afraid of UNIT? Something to hide?"

"More like something to protect." Jillian closed her laptop, sliding it back into its bag. "UNIT has not been the *niciest* when it comes to dealing with myself or your Uncle David or Aunt Beth. Their idea of 'for the greater good' varies widely from mine."

"Uncle David and Aunt Beth are back as well?"

"David has been back for about twenty years and UNIT knew the entire time."

"UNIT knew? Even when the families were asking questions?"

"Yes."

Eve looked away from Jillian, staring out into the sunshine, seeming to watch the world bustle by outside. Finally, she turned back to Jillian. "UNIT does have the best technology. You will go there with a Secret Service escort, who will not leave your side until you are turned over for detention for what you have told me about hacking into the systems, or until you are escorted back to my office. Is that understood?"

Jillian mutely nodded her head in agreement. At least Eve was willing to try to accept it. For once in her life, Jillian didn't know what to say. She watched as Eve pulled out her mobile phone and walked away, talking to presumably someone with the Secret Service. Jillian discreetly pulled her own mobile out under the table and sent a text to Nick, telling him where the car was and that she had seen Eve. Sliding the mobile back into her pocket, she packed up her bag and purse and sat there, waiting on her daughter.

"My daughter..." Jillian whispered under her breath. She thought disappearing in Cardiff had forever changed her life. Now, it seemed like this day in September would change it all over again.

Eve turned back to her as two men in suits and two officers strode through the door. Looking at Jillian, Eve's eyes shone in the low light. "That's her," Eve stated, nodding her head towards Jillian.

## Chapter 4

"You had to go and fucking meddle in things! Piss on everything I've tried to fucking do, fucking puta!" David's face was so red it started to turn purple in rage. Jillian took a step back, only to have the sofa behind her block her escape. "This is all your fucking fault!"

Jillian could feel her blood boiling in her body. She put a hand up and pushed into David's chest, trying to push him away from her. "All I wanted to do was see my daughter!"

"YEAH! Fucking brilliant plan, bringing UNIT and the feds down on us."

"She didn't bring the feds in, UNIT did."

"And how is a group of people who technically don't exist supposed to raise a ruckus with UNIT to get their children back?" David pulled back his arm, to punch her or slap her, Jillian didn't know which.

"Stop it!"

Both of them stopped their arguing to look over at a tear-stained Elizabeth. She buried her face in her hands, half sitting on the arm of the easy chair, making Jillian's heart break. How had their lives turned to the messes they were? Jillian hurried over and knelt in front of Elizabeth, her hands resting on her best friend's knees.

"Oh God, Elizabeth, I am so sorry. I never meant for this to happen, but I had to see Evie, you know that. I had to see my daughter face-to-face. What if you could never see Grace again?" Jillian reached up, holding Elizabeth's wrists and pulling her hands away from her face. Jillian took her hand, wiping the tears away. "I'm sorry."

"I might never see Grace again..." Elizabeth stuttered, tears flowing freely down her cheeks.

Jillian's heart sank through the floor. It was something she would never have wished on her worst enemy, being unable to see their children again, and here she had done it to her best friends, to her own family. Her head fell forward, resting on Elizabeth's knee. Jillian clenched her eyes shut, forcing the tears to stay at bay. She felt like she had lost everything all over again.

"Get up," David said gruffly from behind her.

Mutely, Jillian stood up and turned around to face David. Her jaw felt tight as she fought the urge to yell at him. David grabbed her by the wrist and almost literally dragged her down the hall. He would have been dragging her if she wasn't so adept at staying balanced on heels. He flung her into the twins' darkened room, standing right behind her, breathing down her neck. The cribs were nice and neat, and everything looked like it had not been touched in almost a month - which it had.

"Was it worth it? Was it really worth it?" His fingers curled around her shoulders, making her look at her children's abandoned room.

"I thought it was." It was then that she lost the fight against the tears and they coursed down her cheeks as silent sobs rent through her chest.

In the strangled silence that seemed to permeate the apartment, she heard the front door open and close. Shoving her way past David, she hurried into the living room to see Nick standing next to Elizabeth, rubbing her back. The sobs choked her throat. Nick didn't look at Jillian.

"What's going on?" David huffed out as he walked past Jillian into the living room.

"No luck on them releasing the kids, but I do know they aren't necessarily in UNIT's custody."

"What does that mean?" Elizabeth swiped at her tears with the cuff of her sweater.

"It's something like protective custody meets foster care, run by UNIT."

"How do they have the means for something like that?" Jillian ran her fingertips across her lips.

"Why don't you call in Agent Johnson again?" Nick said to David, not even acknowledging Jillian had said anything.

"I want the kids safe, first and foremost," David replied. "Only if they are not safe will I call Johnson in, and she's ready."

"You already talked to her?" Jillian said, taking David by the arm.

He shook her off. "No shit. The minute someone comes in and tries to take my family, I'm pulling out the big guns." David faced her, shooting a glare her way. "And I don't care who I have to sacrifice to save my family."

"You used to think of me as family at one time," Jillian nearly screamed.

"Before we take off each other's heads, there's one more thing," Nick stated, pulling out his secure laptop from his courier bag. He opened the laptop and looked at the screen. "Someone has accessed Samantha's account at a kiosk just off the Rue St. Honore." He turned the laptop around so they could see the CCTV footage.

Jillian ran her hand along the back of her neck as she gazed at the picture of a young-looking redhead carrying a black leather laptop bag, wearing a leather jacket tied around her waist. Samantha had come back and was in Paris. Jillian's mind quickly played out every scenario of how they could get in touch with Samantha and everything came back as impossible right now. Jillian scratched her hairline, cursing UNIT.

"It won't fucking work. We can't get to her. Fucking balls of blue--"

"Are we sure? What about Agent Johnson?" Elizabeth asked, cutting into David's rant.

"It's Samantha or the kids?" David stated between clenched teeth. "If UNIT doesn't know she's turned up, Samantha can survive better than the kids can." He started pacing the room, clutching at his stomach. "Damn it! Johnson might have a couple of ideas, but Samantha will have to wait."

"Samantha was always the one that looked out for us," Elizabeth stated.

Not able to take anymore of the silent treatment, Jillian hurried off to her bedroom. She started straightening up the dresser and wiping her hand across invisible specks of dust. Not finding anything new to clean after nearly a month without the kids, Jillian sank down on the bed. Her head snapped up as Nick opened the bedroom door and strode in, unbuttoning his shirt.

"Nick--"

"I'm just showering and changing my clothes," he stated, digging through the closet, his back to her.

"I would like it if you would sleep here tonight," she said, rubbing the blanket on his side of the bed.

"I'll think about sleeping in my home when my children are once again sleeping in it," Nick said, taking his clothes into the bathroom and never looking at her.

Jillian wrung her hands together and then grabbed her laptop from the bedside table. Since David and Elizabeth had come to New York and taken over her spare bedroom, Jillian felt like a prisoner in her own house, afraid to leave the bedroom unless she needed to go to work - someone needed to keep Ortiz Industries going while David played at being saviour. She hacked into the system so she could see the footage of Samantha again. She looked fine physically.

Nick hurried out of the bathroom in jeans and sweatshirt, and grabbed his suit in a garment bag. "I'll be at the office if you really need me," he stated and quickly left.

Her heart felt so empty, like a shell of what it could be. Jillian watched her screensaver pop up, showing her pictures of the twins, of Nick, of David and Elizabeth of James and Grace. They were each strong, but as a group, they had been quite impressive, balancing out each other's faults. They thought she never noticed, being the quiet one, but she always noticed, more than they realized. And she had learned to trust her gut. Sometimes they used to joke that she was psychic, but either way, Jillian took it at as a good thing. Just like how she believed they would get their kids back.

Stopping the screensaver, Jillian looked at Samantha once again. She had been their Mother Doctor, always stepping in and taking care of them. Samantha had nearly lost it when her mother died. She had clung to her mother as if she had never had one and this was all she would get. Stifling a yawn, Jillian laid her head back on the pillows.

*Jillian hovered over the toilet in the hotel bathroom. Lynnae quickly disappeared and she was alone. As she heaved up her dinner from Rosemary and Thyme, Jillian could hear the door open. Out of the corner of her eye she saw Samantha. Heck, she knew it was her before she could ask how Jillian was doing.*

*"I feel awful," Jillian said, still hunched over the toilet. "This is as bad as morning sickness, or rather, worse," Jillian hurriedly said as she coughed up a couple more chunks.*

*Samantha crouched behind her, hand gently on Jillian's back. Having Samantha so close was very comforting. Samantha pulled back Jillian's long, dark hair and held a cold washcloth to her forehead.*

*"Breathe slowly," Samantha said. "It'll be okay, there's a doctor on the way."*

*"Why aren't you tossing your cookies everywhere?"*

*"Because I can't while the rest of you are sick. Oh, I want to, trust me on that one. I ain't kissing anyone any time soon." Samantha stated, a smirk on her face that didn't reach her eyes.*

*Samantha knelt next to Jillian as another wave passed through her. Her stomach tried ejecting itself out of her body, but Jillian tried to remain calm, feeling the heat of Samantha's hand gently rubbing across the top of her back while it held her long hair.*

*Jillian leaned into Samantha's chest, loving the comfort of the moment, despite wanting to just die. She was glad she had found this circle of friends since Tom's death. Jillian had felt so lost; then she met David in group therapy for grief after his wife had died, followed by Samantha, Elizabeth and Lynnae. There were times she felt closer to them than any of her siblings ever felt to her.*

Jillian ran her fingers through her hair and blinked her eyes open. She was amazed she had even been able to fall asleep. Turning over in the bed, she pressed the Enter key on her laptop and fumbled her fingers across the keyboard, inputting her password. The time read 6:00am. By some dumb luck, she had almost had a full night's sleep.

She didn't dare turn on the lights as she fumbled around in the semi-darkness of dawn. Jillian pulled out a pair of black jeans, slipping those on with her leather heeled boots. Feeling around her closet, she pulled out a light top and slipped her favorite grey cardigan on over it. Packing the laptop into its bag, she then slid her PDA into her front pocket.

Moving stealthily through the quiet flat, she slipped into David and Elizabeth's room. Seeing what she was looking for on top of the dresser, Jillian carefully picked up David's car key, trying to not let it jiggle or make sound in any way. She tucked that into her other jeans pocket. David huffed out a mighty breath and turned over in the bed, making Jillian freeze in place.

Waiting a minute without breathing, she watched as he wrapped an arm around Elizabeth and pulled her into his chest. Jillian then snuck back out through the bedroom door and moved down the hall, knowing each step that would creak in the slightest and bypassing them. She unclicked the door, disengaging the alarm briefly. She sidled into the hallway and locked the door behind her. Jillian hurried to the elevator, hating how she could hear the soft grinding through the shaft.

Striding out into the beginning sun, Jillian took in a deep breath of the chill air. She had to do it. Oh, she knew David would have some choice words for her; that was not surprising. She was worried about

how Nick would react. Jillian headed for the park at the end of the road. There was a dead zone in municipal camera coverage that would allow her to double back to the garage. David wouldn't know she had left the city until he noticed his car keys missing.

She knew Elizabeth would sleep for a couple more hours. Elizabeth usually fretted and worked until she passed out, and being in David's arms actually helped her relax and sleep. Elizabeth being there had helped him. It was as if they had a history none of them knew about and had learned to trust each other implicitly, despite the occasional screaming match.

Jillian hugged herself. She wished Nick had deigned to stay by her side. In the middle of all this chaos, she wished she had him to comfort her and hold her, like he had at first when she had the nightmares and strange dreams. She let out a pent-up sigh as she slipped out her sunglasses and slid them on her face. Jillian pulled a hair band from her bag and put her hair up into a ponytail.

Doubling back through the alley, Jillian pulled out her PDA and scrambled the security pass system and headed into the garage. She mutely nodded at the one clerk and walked through the rows of cars until she saw David's blue Porsche. Hitting the alarm button, she opened the door and slipped into the now-classic car. She relaxed her body against the soft leather for a brief moment and then fired up the engine. Hitting the accelerator she exited the garage through the open door, waving at the guard, and hit the highway.

She had been driving for about two hours when the on-board communications system blinked at her. She tried to ignore it until David's voice nearly growled at her through the car's speakers. Jillian pulled over to the side of the highway, put on her emergency lights and slumped into the driver's seat.

"What the fuck do you think you're doing?" David screamed.

"Trying to fix this," Jillian stated through clenched teeth.

"Grand theft auto sure helps the situation," David retorted.

"Then have me arrested," Jillian snapped back.

"That would be too easy," David replied. "All you're doing is hanging yourself. Tell me why I don't tell UNIT where you are right now and have them take you?"

"Because you're afraid of what they would do to any of us if you gave them free reign. Because..." Jillian started to choke up. "Because I hope somewhere in your heart you still care what happens to me, and our families."

There was a long pause on his end of the conversation. Jillian tried to take a couple of deep breaths, wrapping her fingers around the steering wheel to make them stop shaking.

"What's your fucking brilliant plan?" David finally asked.

"I don't know."

"Oh, that's great. You expect me to--"

"I expect you to trust me. I know what can be done, but whether or not I can make it happen will take a lot of convincing."

"You ain't convincing me much here."

"It's not you I have to convince." Jillian dropped her chin down, burying it into her chest, clenching her eyes shut. "You can follow my trajectory, you have probably figured out where I am headed. If I go beyond Washington without contacting any of you, you know what you can do."

"Don't think I won't," David stated, ending the transmission.

"I hope you will," Jillian said out loud. "It might be the only thing that saves me," she said to no one in particular as she shut off the emergency lights and put the car back into gear. Slipping into traffic, Jillian took a deep breath and continued towards Washington, D.C.

## Chapter 5

If Jillian concentrated enough, she could count the individual fibers in the burgundy carpet that stretched from wall to wall in Eve's Senate office. The pounding in her head seemed to get worse as the day wore on. Bringing her left hand up to her temple, her wedding ring flashed in the bright lights. Jillian closed her eyes and sighed, massaging her forehead with her fingers, willing the migraine to leave her the hell alone.

As if that wasn't bad enough, she could practically feel the office assistant Eve had left in the office with her boring a hole into her head with his eyes. Sure, it was probably rare for someone who did not have an appointment with Senator Eve Watson to be seen by her, much less left alone in her private offices, but this aide was really starting to get on her nerves, especially now. Now, he just stood against the wall, holding a stack of papers, running his fingers along the corner, making a constant 'fwip-fwip-fwip' sound.

"Thank you, Kasey," Eve said, hurrying in the door.

"Do you need anything else, Ma'am?"

Eve held the door open for Kasey. "No, that will be quite all right. I need you to finish going over the new additions to the Pritzker bill so you can brief me on them later." Eve waited until Kasey was out the door and securely closed it behind him. Turning on her heel, Eve looked squarely at Jillian. "How are you doing?" Eve asked as she made her way across the office and behind her desk.

"I've had better days," Jillian replied as she stopped rubbing her forehead and folded her hands in her lap.

"I'm sorry about making you go through the tests at UNIT, but I had to be sure..."

"I understand," Jillian replied. "Truly, I do understand. How our lives have reached this point that this is what we do understand, my mind doesn't want to believe." Jillian just wanted to collapse into the chair that held her, but she knew she had to be strong.

Across the desk, wide, hazel eyes looked back at her. They were not the same eyes that used to stare up at her at bedtime, wanting to stay up just a little bit longer, wanting to watch her Sailor Moon DVDs, babbling on about her dreams. Instead, they were the eyes of a woman. A woman who had seen too much. Her daughter had once upon a time wanted to be an actress, or something so fantastical, and now she was one of the headliners of the U.S. Senate.

Jillian looked around the office, taking in the subtleties. Here and there were little things that spoke to Eve's life now. A civic award from when she was younger and just starting out. Her diploma from Stanford. A copy of her marriage license to Tracy Sommers. Jillian leaned forward and picked up the framed photo of Eve, Tracy, and their son, Tommy - named for Eve's father. Her fingers traced along the glass.

"Why did you do it?" Jillian asked.

"Do what?"

"Why did you go into public office?"

"Is this what you really drove all the way here to find out? Why I went into politics?"

"No," Jillian replied, looking up at her older daughter. "But I do want to know."

Eve let out a sigh as she undid the loose bun that was coming undone. Her long dark hair was so similar to her mother's. "I wondered if things would have been different if you had been there. I wondered how my life would have turned out if I had you to protect me through it all."

"Me not being there? Is that what did it?"

"Partly." Eve took a deep breath. "One thing that always sticks out in my mind happened about a year after you disappeared. We started acting weird, all of us kids. Saying things we didn't know we were saying. It happened to every kid in the world, as long as they were awake. Later, I would find out, when my eyes were able to be 'top level eyes only' that the aliens who had come wanted the children. Years later, people found out and disseminated the information that the governments were going to give a percentage of the children to the aliens."

Jillian's hands covered her mouth, unable to utter a word at what her daughter was reciting. How had they missed the world going mad? She folded her hands in front of her face. Never mind any alien threat, she had left her daughter behind to face the atrocities that humanity could unleash upon itself.

"One of my best friends disappeared that night. In Britain, they had decided to choose the 10% that were from the poorest areas, or from underachieving schools. Here, the government couldn't face that, so they started by rounding up the sickest kids and the kids in orphanages and foster care. Kids who were already dying or would never be missed was our idea of a reasonable exchange. Teresa was in the hospital with cancer. They moved her, she got lost in the shuffle. By the time things settled down, Teresa would not go back to the hospital. She died a month later because of them."

Jillian placed the family portrait back down on Eve's desk and stood up, staring out the window at the families that walked past the Capitol. Tears silently streamed down her face. She couldn't let Eve see her cry, but all she wanted to do was hold her daughter and let the years melt away. She felt a hand on her shoulder, but she couldn't look at Eve yet. Jillian willed the tears to stop.

"I knew I couldn't let that happen again. I knew that if you or Dad were around, you wouldn't have let it happen. Someone had to protect the kids if it should ever happen again. That's why I went into politics. I would sell my soul if it could save everyone."

"No, no, don't say that."

"You're the same way. The stories Grandma and Grandpa would tell me, that sounds just like you."

Jillian turned to Eve, facing her. Her hand reached out, taking her daughter's hand. "Don't give yourself up. You might need yourself again, to save others. Just do the best you can."

"Is that why you're here? Doing the best you can?"

Reluctantly pulling away, Jillian sat back down in the chair, crossing her legs. "I'm trying. UNIT took the kids."

"What do you mean?"

"UNIT took the twins, your brother and sister. And they took Elizabeth and David's two kids as well, James and Grace. While they were running the tests on me that you asked for, they took them away from us, stole them from us, and we can't get them back. And, I'm worried about you."

"Why would they do that? Why should you be worried about me?" Eve leaned against the edge of her desk.

"One of the reasons they want the children is because there is something different in my blood, along with Uncle David's and Aunt Elizabeth's. There are at least trace elements of it in both Alex and Aimi's blood, along with James and Grace's. There is probably the same element in your blood."

"Why haven't they taken me, then?"

"We didn't know until about five years ago. And making you disappear would probably be a lot more noticeable than a group of nothings." Jillian wiped the back of her hand across her cheek, making sure it was dry, keeping herself under control.

"What do you expect me to do? Especially considering you haven't contacted me in the last month." Eve looked down on her.

"I didn't know you had been trying, until your assistant told me. We've kind of been *sanctioned* by UNIT since the tests you asked me to take. Our communication has been breached, which is why David and Elizabeth are staying in my apartment right now. They basically censored our phone calls and mail, and we even think our email."

"Even from the Capitol?" Eve looked skeptical.

"Apparently." Jillian studied her fingernails, not looking at Eve. She took a steadying breath, looking straight into Eve's eyes. "If we don't get the children back... Do you know what it would be like for them to grow up without their parents?"

"Yes, I do know."

"But you had your grandparents. The twins will have no one. No family, nothing to hold them together. I did a little checking. They have each of the children in a different safe house, the siblings aren't even together."

"I still don't know what you want me to do," Eve said, slowly walking around her desk, sitting down in the chair, hands in her lap. "They are UNIT."

"And you are a top, influential Senator."

"Yes? Do you want me to give them speeches ad nauseum?"

"No, but you head the Senate Finance Committee that approves the American funding UNIT receives. Your committee also approves the yearly renewal on the properties that UNIT uses while on American soil. If you are anything like me or your father, I know you can play hardball with the best of them."

Eve balled her hands up in front of her face, staring at nothing. The silence was like a blanket over the room. Eve's eyes flicked over to the side, and Jillian noticed that Eve was staring at her family portrait with her son.

"Are you sure UNIT has done this of their own volition?"

"As far as we know, yes. Uncle David has a rather extensive file on everything UNIT has done, on what we can reconstruct about what happened to us, and on Torchwood."

"Torchwood?" Eve seemed to start, looking at Jillian intently.

"We think Torchwood is connected to what happened to us all those years ago, but we haven't been able to corroborate it fully yet."

Eve nearly launched herself out of the chair. "We'll leave the Torchwood angle alone for now. I'll need to see this file. I'll get started with making some ultimatums about the children, but if UNIT has been pulling this stuff on U.S. citizens, I need to have a major talk with them."

"I'll start arranging it with David." Jillian stood up herself, her stomach doing flips. For the first time in a long while, she felt hopeful, and almost whole again. "Thank you."

"On one condition...Mom."

Jillian looked at Eve in surprise. It was the first time she had called her anything sentimental since she had revealed herself to her daughter. "What is it?"

"I want to be able to hold my brother and sister in my arms."

"Nothing would make me happier," Jillian replied, her heart swelling. She had hope again. That was enough for now.

## Chapter 6

Jillian was getting tired just watching Elizabeth pace; she, Elizabeth and David had been cooped up in her apartment for two days, waiting. Jillian sat in a chair in the front room, running her fingers along the edge of little Aimi's blanket. David waltzed in and sat by the desk, his laptop out.

"Come on Foxy, be nice to Daddy," David said as he worked on breaking into some government's system.

Jillian peered across the room and looked at his screen, groaning. "How did you find pictures of Tia Carerre looking like that? The woman is a grandmother now."

"As if I'd tell you," David retorted.

Ever since she had stolen his car, despite bringing it back in good shape, he had been even icier with her. Two more weeks of Mr. Freeze had not helped any of their moods. And now, Eve had them holed up together for two solid days unable to even go to the office and get away from each other, waiting on some answer about their children. David's computer screen caught her eye as she saw a live feed from a European street. Without prompting, she stood up and walked behind him, staring at the screen. Her heart stopped in her throat as she caught sight of red hair. Walking down the street they were watching was Samantha, her leather laptop bag on her hip.

"Oh God, she must feel so alone," Elizabeth muttered behind them.

"She's strong, stronger than any of us realize," David replied.

"But, we almost have all of us together again, and we can't do anything about it," Elizabeth said, teary eyed.

David reached out, taking her hand. He pulled Elizabeth into his lap, hands on her shoulders. "I know. But she'll be fine. I was alone for so long, and hopefully she doesn't have long to wait." David chuckled. "Apparently, she's been trying to hack into Ortiz Industries to look at the employee roster. I think she knows."

"Can't you let her in?"

"Maybe. If I know UNIT isn't watching. Maybe I can get her a scrambled message."

"Jack Jones," Jillian muttered to no one in particular.

"What?" David craned his neck to look at her.

"Jack Jones. Let her see something that only Jack Jones would do. The books haven't been around for, like, 25 years. And only someone really trying will know what it is in reference to. What would Jack Jones say to Nurse Owens if he needed her to stay put and keep undercover?"

The three of them looked at each other. "Book two," Elizabeth finally said.

"What?" David turned to her.

"Book two, *The Demons of Highgate*. There was something similar to that in book two."

"I don't remember that," David stated, looking back at the computer. He clicked a couple of buttons and found Samantha again. "But if we go searching for the books online, they might get suspicious."

"Don't worry, I have a couple of copies with me," Elizabeth stated, disentangling herself from David. "They keep me close to her. I think I packed the Jack Jones stories." Elizabeth took off down the hall towards the guest bedroom.

"She never ceases to surprise me," David said softly.

"Elizabeth has always been like that," Jillian replied. "There's more to her than any of us will ever admit. There's more to each of us than we will ever face." Jillian leaned back in the chair, her hands idly playing with the blanket. She let out a sigh, and suddenly didn't feel so hot.

*"What the fuck is going on?" David started, waving his arms at Lynnae and Samantha.*

*The two women looked at each other, and then back at David and Jillian. "Maybe you should sit down," Samantha said.*

*"Like fucking hell I am." David stuck his finger in Samantha's face. "You two know what the hell is going on, and I am tired of being out of the loop on this shit. Tell us now. What the hell is Captain Courageous out there about to do that it has all of them fucking freaked out and what the hell does it have to do with us?"*

*Samantha pulled out one of the chairs and plopped down into it, just staring at the floor, while Lynnae leaned against the table right next to Samantha. Jillian crouched down in front of Samantha as she continued to stare downwards. She put her hands on Samantha's knee.*

*"You need to tell us what's going on. How could Jack possibly have memories of us?"*

*"Jack could be a father to some of us," Samantha quietly stated.*

*"Bullshit. That's not possible and you know it. He barely looks older than I am," David retorted, stomping across to the other side of the large conference room. "Unless he can fucking move back and forth in time; that's not even possible."*

*"Have you looked around this place? This is Torchwood. It's probably possible," Lynnae huffed.*

*"Plus, I saw the DNA tests Owen ran on all five of us," Samantha interjected.*

*"How was he able to fucking do DNA tests?" David demanded.*

*"He was the house doctor that came during our food poisoning debacle. He took blood samples of each of us, remember," Samantha stated.*

*Jillian thought back through the pain of the event, and saw his face clear as day, hiding behind a suit and glasses. She sat back on her heels, rubbing her fingers across her face. Shaking her head, unwilling to believe what they were saying. Her heart raced, her pulse pounded inside her head.*

*"Que chingados!" David paced around the conference room table. He stopped by the end under the big plasma screen and whirled around, facing the girls. Slamming his fist down on the table, he seethed with anger. "How much have these assholes been fucking around with us?"*

*"I don't know if it's Torchwood that's been 'fucking around' with us, per se," Samantha stated, putting a hand over Jillian's as it rested on her knee.*

*"What do you mean?" David growled.*

*Samantha and Lynnae exchanged another look with each other. "Owen seems as surprised as the rest of us at the outcome of the tests," Samantha stated. "Something went wrong somewhere--"*

*"You bet it fucking did," David retorted, sitting on the corner of the conference table.*

*"But what does all of this have to do with what Jack is doing out there right now?" Jillian questioned.*

*"I think he might have memories," Samantha replied.*

*"Memories of what?" David glared at each of the girls in turn.*

*"Us as kids. They are our...parents," Lynnae stated, burying her head in her hands.*

*"Oh, you have got to be--"*

*"What did the DNA results say?" Jillian asked, cutting off David.*

*Samantha let out a sigh and sat back in the chair. "Lynnae is the daughter of Jack and Toshiko. David is the son of Owen and Toshiko. You are the daughter of Ianto and Toshiko. I am--"*

*"Gee, mi madre sure as hell gets around, doesn't she?" David grunted as he stood up again, facing the wall.*

*"David!" Lynnae said, quickly standing up.*

*Samantha stood up herself and pushed past Jillian, grabbing David by the shoulders and spinning him around. "You know nothing about them," she yelled, throwing David into the wall.*

*David grabbed her arms and forced Samantha up against the conference room table, bending her back over it. "Neither do you," he spit out at her.*

*"This is getting us nowhere," Lynnae harshly said, pulling David off of Samantha.*

*"How do you expect me to believe that supposed doctor and that other woman are my parents?" David shook Lynnae off of him and stepped backwards into the far corner. "How can you believe it?"*

*"We saw the hard, physical evidence," Samantha replied. "You know how much I loved my mother, and how much her death affected me. Do you think this is easy to accept that my parents are supposedly not my parents?" Samantha fought to keep the tears at bay, but Jillian recognized the signs at how much it was hurting her.*

*"If we are their children, we should get more evidence," Jillian said. "Why don't we see if Jack has found any memories of us buried in his mind?"*

*Jillian led the way out of the conference room and into the main area of the Hub, as the Torchwood team called it. Walking up the stairs, Jillian's throat choked up as she saw Jack wrenching against the straps that held him to the chair, the mind probe glowing slightly; he was sweating, his jaw tight and his body was twisting in uncomfortable waves.*

*"Safe," Owen said, watching a computer monitor about a foot away from where Jack sat.*

*Jillian found herself staring at Ianto and Tosh; her 'Dad' was hovering over Jack, watching out for him, and her 'Mom' was the one operating the machine with cool efficiency. She could be their daughter. They seemed so much like her, but how was it possible? Now that she knew the truth, looking at Tosh's eyes, she saw her own eye's reflecting back at her. She took a shuddering breath as the reality began to sink in, when suddenly Jack spoke, his voice straining, yet soft.*

*"She's so small, but she's a little fighter. Tosh, you're still tired, let me take care of her." Jack's fingers flexed and pressed against the chair, turning white. "Shhhhh... now. Even Myfanwy is getting tired of your cries. You're starting to beat her." Jack started to hum a song Jillian had never heard before.*

*Oh God, Jack had memories. There were memories there. It was real. They were her parents. Her head snapped back as Jack began to talk again, his voice barely audible.*

*"The Hub," Jack choked out. "They were all born in the Hub. Something is wrong with what happened. We need to keep them safe. Need to keep us safe. They were born in the Hub." Jack choked a little. "How? Why did this happen? I can remember, oh god, I... I... my baby bump is showing and I can't even leave to go grab some toast. Too many children too quickly." Jack's voice trailed off.*

*Her mind tried to comprehend what all this meant. It was then that Jack's scream brought her back to reality.*

-----

*"Jillian? Jillian?"*

*Her breath caught in her throat, making her gag as she came back to the here and now. She struggled to sit up as David pushed her back against the cushions. Jillian tried to get up, but David held her down as Elizabeth came hurrying back into the front room with a wet washcloth and a glass of water.*

"How's she doing?" Elizabeth asked as she sat down on the sofa next to Jillian. She held the damp cloth up against Jillian's forehead.

"What are you doing?" Jillian looked from David to Elizabeth, feeling weighted, as if it hurt to move her body.

"Taking care of you. You've been exhausted. David said you mumbled something about not feeling well and you fell asleep right here, but wouldn't wake up when we tried telling you about our idea." Elizabeth held the glass of water up to Jillian's lips. Jillian took a sip, relishing the coolness as it passed through her lips.

Jillian looked at David, who nodded his head. A sigh escaped Jillian's lips as she shakily took the glass from Elizabeth, sinking back into the sofa cushions. Sipping the cool water, Jillian's eyes wandered around the dark room. Darkness came so early these days; everywhere, her life was getting darker.

"What happened?" David sternly questioned.

Jillian closed her eyes, trying to focus on what she had dreamed...but it didn't feel like a dream. It all felt so real. She recalled herself, David, Samantha and poor Lynnae - Lynnae who had not been returned to them yet. Samantha and Lynnae were talking about a man, a man who... who was....

"Jack."

"What?" Elizabeth touched Jillian's face with the palm of her hand, making her open her eyes.

"There was a man with Torchwood. His name was Jack."

"Where the fuck are you getting this from?" David pulled the desk chair over and sat down in front of her.

"I...I don't know. I just saw it, but I can't quite comprehend it."

"When did you see it?" Elizabeth asked.

"Right now! In my head," Jillian stated as she pushed herself up from the sofa. David quickly stood up as well, and she was sure he was going to push her back down again. Jillian gave him a cross look, and he stepped aside. She staggered through both of them, unsteady on her feet, but determined to get away. Placing her hand flat on the desk to steady herself, Jillian set the glass down.

Before she could say anything, Nick came bursting through the front door. His laptop bag banging against his leg, suit jacket flung over his arm. He was sweating, despite it being late fall. Nick dropped his belongings in the armchair next to the door. They all stood up to face him.

"She came through, Eve came through!" Nick announced

"What?" Elizabeth took a couple of steps towards him.

"Senator Watson's office contacted the Ortiz Foundation about providing transport for some children between a military facility and their families."

"But the Foundation doesn't do that kind of stuff," Elizabeth interjected.

Jillian started breathing heavily; her chest felt like it was constricting around her heart, which was about to burst. It couldn't be, it just couldn't be happening so quickly, so soon. She had almost given up hope, despite knowing in the back of her mind she would never give up trying to get her children back, protecting them at all costs. She was only human, prone to her own doubts.

"We do now," David hurriedly replied.

"But that's not--" Elizabeth paused as she seemed to realize what Nick meant. "Did the office say where the children were supposed to go?"

"Just...home," Nick stated, relief evident in his voice.

"When are they supposed to be picked up?" David opened his own laptop and started working his way into the city's mainframe. It amazed Jillian how easily he navigated his way around computers, and yet, when it came to human emotions, he still had a lot to learn.

"First thing in the morning." Nick undid his tie and threw it down onto the armchair.

Jillian absently walked over and picked up Nick's suit jacket and tie, laying them out neatly. Her fingers brushed the lapel, afraid of even looking at Nick. "Should we go with?" Jillian asked, knowing the answer before she finished uttering the question. The mother in her wanted to go.

"No," David stated. "They'll expect that. If it were me, I would plan on it. They could take us and Eve would have nothing to back her up."

"You have a whole corporation, people know your name," Elizabeth muttered.

"Yeah, and they have the United Nations behind them and who knows how many governments. Companies go under and accidents happen." David tapped his fingers along the desk. "I have a phone call I need to make. The less you guys know now, the better." David grabbed his mobile phone and hurried into the spare bedroom, slamming the door shut behind him.

Elizabeth sat there, turning a Jack Jones book she had picked up over and over in her hand. Her eyes kept flicking between David's computer and the closed door down the hall. Her breathing was heavy as they waited.

Nick paced the room, pulling out his smart phone and finishing up some odds and ends with the company.

Jillian couldn't handle the silence and tried to not cough with her dry throat. Slipping between the two members of her family, Jillian ducked into the kitchen. Running the water to cool it off, she grabbed a fresh glass from the cabinet above the sink. Holding the glass under the running water, her mind

drifted to the thought that all of her children would finally meet each other. The cold water cascading over her fingertips made her start and Jillian quickly shut off the faucet and took a careful sip, holding the glass above the sink.

"You shouldn't let yourself get distracted," Nick admonished as he opened the refrigerator and grabbed a can of soda. He popped the top of the can and chugged half of it.

"Wow, should I be happy that you finally care about your wife?"

"Don't do that," Nick grudgingly said.

"Do what?" Jillian slid the glass onto the empty counter.

"Act like you know what you're talking about," Nick replied, slamming the can down on the kitchen table.

"I used to know everything that went on in this house, in my life, even in your life."

"Yeah, well, you balled that up, didn't you?"

"You're blaming me?"

"You brought this upon us. You," Nick forcefully said as he took over Jillian's space, "brought this into our house." He put his hands on her hips. "You betrayed us."

"What did you expect me to do?" She put her hands over his, trying to pull away. "What do you want me to do?"

Nick pushed her into the counter, holding her there, his fingers digging into her hips. "Fix it."

"How? I already did."

"Are you sorry?" Nick asked, pressing his body against hers.

"That I have my daughter back? No," Jillian stated. She pulled back as Nick's blue eyes seemed to turn a dark, stormy grey. "That I put you through this? That you now know how much it hurts to lose a child, even for a while? That I put David and Elizabeth through this? Yes." She tried to hold back the tears, but could feel them threatening to spill from her eyes. "That I think our marriage is over? Yes."

Nick loosened his grip on Jillian and his features softened. "Our marriage isn't over," he choked out.

"What do you mean?"

"I'm hurt; I've never felt like this before. There were times I felt like I could just kill you, but in the end I couldn't. I wanted to just let UNIT take you as well, so you could hurt as much as I did, so you could feel how betrayed I felt, but in the end I couldn't let you go."

"You never had to let me go."

"That's not what UNIT wanted. UNIT wanted me to help, they wanted to take you," Nick softly said, not looking at her.

She listened to his words and was shocked at what he said. "Let UNIT take me?"

Nick pulled back, letting go of her. Jillian reached out for his hand, for the feel of touch, the feel of another human being. She grabbed his hand, yanking him back towards her. He looked her in the eyes, and she could see his Adam's apple bob up and down as he struggled to speak.

"UNIT came to *talk* to me right after all this started. They gave me a couple of options, especially after David and Elizabeth hit town. I knew what they had in mind wasn't right. I couldn't do it. I could not hand you over to them, even if it meant getting our kids back sooner." Nick looked down at their hands entwined and ran his thumb along the inside of her palm. He pulled his hand from hers and sat down on one of the kitchen chairs. "I couldn't betray you even to get our kids back. I betrayed them."

"You didn't betray anyone," Jillian stated. She stood in front of Nick, her hands on either side of his neck. Jillian pulled him in close, gently kissing him on the lips. His hands grabbed her wrists and pulled her in closer to him. Her tongue parted his lips, exploring the man she had missed so much.

"If this is strategizing, I'm doing it the wrong fucking way," David said from the doorway to the kitchen.

"Just talking," Nick said as he quickly stood up.

"Right," David drawled out as he headed into the living room.

Jillian and Nick hurriedly followed, still holding hands. They parted when they entered the living room so Nick could grab his own laptop. He brought it over to the desk.

"Where are we picking the kids up from?"

"They haven't said yet, but there is a UNIT safe house in White Plains. From what I've heard, I think they'll do the exchange there, so as to not reveal the location of their other safe houses or the families the kids stayed with." Nick pulled up a map on his computer.

"Do they think we're going to take out everybody involved?" Elizabeth questioned.

"Shouldn't we?" David snapped back.

"The foster families might not have been fully aware of the situation." Elizabeth stood there, her hands on her hips.

"Bullshit," David replied.

"Have we always been completely aware of everything UNIT is doing, even in regard to ourselves? They lie to us, they lie to the government; why wouldn't they lie to their own operatives?"

Nick, Jillian and David looked at each other and then at Elizabeth. She had a point. Nick buried his attention back into the laptop, pulling up a satellite image of the area around the UNIT safe house. David hovered over the younger man's shoulder, studying the image.

"How did you get the exact location of this safe house?" David queried, folding his arms across his chest.

"I've seen it before," Nick hurriedly said, giving Jillian a haunted look. He started tapping away on the computer, pulling up the satellite images of the surrounding area.

Before David could say anything else, Jillian stilled him with her hand on his shoulder. David shot her a stormy look, but she silently pleaded with her eyes. This must have been where UNIT decided to *talk* with Nick. She wondered what they had done to him. It made her love this man even more.

"I say we track the cars from a remote location," David stated, turning to his own laptop.

"Where? Here?" Elizabeth asked.

"It's safe enough; but I say we do it from the office in One Tower. More escape routes if necessary," David stated.

"Who's going in?" Jillian asked, sitting down on the arm of the chair.

"Rick will be driving; he knows the area well," David stated. "And he had originally been a suggestion from Agent Johnson." David looked back at them. "The caregiver in the car will be Johnson."

Elizabeth gasped out loud. Jillian had only met Johnson once, but it was enough to know that the woman meant business. Hell, it was because of her that Jillian had even made it home. Johnson was an intriguing woman, and on the long flight back to the States, Jillian saw the other woman put her defenses down only once; but it was enough to keep Jillian guessing about the things Johnson had done in the past.

"We are not going to go to war with UNIT with our children in the middle of it," Jillian said, more to make sure that everyone was on the same page than anything else.. David had a look on his face, darker than ever before.

"Not until the children are safe," David replied, turning his back on them.

## Chapter 7

Jillian paced the length of her office, trying to keep up pretenses about running a business while David and Elizabeth were huddled over a computer in the closed-off conference room down the hall. Nick busied himself in his office, running a scheduled meeting between the company and one of their contracts in London.

Tugging at the grey tie she had decided to wear that day, Jillian plopped down into her office chair. It was a very unladylike posture, but she didn't give a damn. Bringing her hand up, balancing it on the arm of the chair, Jillian dropped her head into it, trying to keep the nervous nausea at bay. Rick and Johnson had left three hours ago, and hadn't checked in yet.

She could feel someone looking at her, and Jillian raised her head, staring at the open door to her office. There stood her secretary, Jen, a digital pad in her hand. Letting loose a deep-rooted sigh, Jillian waved Jen in to her office. Jen closed the door behind her and quietly approached Jillian's desk.

"What is it?" Jillian queried, sitting up properly in her chair.

"Dana, one of the security guards, just called up from downstairs."

"You could have told me this over the phone," Jillian stated, looking at Jen. Jen nervously tapped on the edge of the digital pad. "What's going on?" Jillian asked. If one of the security guards was calling up to Ortiz Industries it must be something important, and if Jen felt the need to tell her in person, that worried Jillian.

"Alice Moretti is downstairs."

Jillian closed her eyes a moment, seeing red. The woman had taken off months ago, after dropping some bombshells on Jillian. Now she had shown up, out of the blue, in the middle of all this chaos. Jillian almost told Amy to send Alice away, but something stopped her. Alice had known about Torchwood. Perhaps she and Elizabeth should talk to Alice Moretti one more time before they fired her.

"Have one of the officers escort her straight up to Conference Room 3. I will meet with her there. If I am not there yet, I want you stay with her. No one leaves Alice Moretti alone here."

Jen nodded and hurried out the door. Jillian stood up, running her hand over her torso, trying to calm down the jackhammering bunnies in her stomach. This was hopefully the time to get some answers. Jillian closed the door to her office behind her and hurried down to the conference room to grab Elizabeth.

"Beth, I need to see you. Now!" Jillian hissed as she stuck her head into the room.

"What?" Elizabeth said as both she and David looked up at Jillian.

Jillian took a deep breath. "Alice Moretti is on her way up here."

"Are you fucking kidding me?" David bellowed as he quickly stood up from the table.

"No; and you're staying here," Jillian responded.

"Excuse me?" David glared at Jillian.

"She ran once. I don't want her to run again until we get some answers," Jillian stated.

"Have we heard about the kids?" Nick asked from behind her, nearly breathing down Jillian's back.

Jillian resisted the urge to jump. She was already on edge and Nick had a way of silently sneaking up on people. Jillian looked to Elizabeth, who merely shook her head.

"Damn it," Nick said as he sidled into the conference room. He suddenly looked at Jillian and David staring each other down. "What's going on?"

"Alice Moretti," David said through clenched teeth.

"What about her?"

"Jillian invited her upstairs."

"You did what?" Nick turned on Jillian, advancing towards her.

"She showed up downstairs; the security guards called us. There are things she knows about, including Torchwood and Cardiff, and I want some answers." Jillian could feel her pulse throbbing in her neck.

"Her mother supposedly worked for Torchwood; that doesn't mean she knows anything," Elizabeth interjected, her hand on David's shoulder.

"Alice Moretti knows more than she is saying." Jillian took a deep breath. "When we last saw each other at the coffee shop, Alice admitted to me that Torchwood did exist and..." Jillian looked at each member of her family in turn, "still kind of does exist."

"I've been tracking reports..." David looked down at the computer for a moment. He popped his head back up, his eyes darker than usual. "I'm talking to her."

"No!" Elizabeth squeezed David's shoulder, making him flinch. "Jillian and I will talk to her. I'm her boss anyway." Elizabeth pulled down on her denim jacket and then looked at Nick. "Can you have security standing by, possibly the police?"

"Her having secrets is not reason enough to arrest her," Nick replied.

"No," Elizabeth softly said. "But stealing company property, like a laptop is an arrestable offense. Along with the fact that she lied on her hiring papers." Elizabeth started heading out the door, grabbing Jillian by the elbow. "Let's go."

Jillian looked at her friend. She honestly saw, for once, how much the events of the past had changed her; how UNIT and Torchwood had changed her. Jillian gently pulled away from Elizabeth and led the way down the hall to Conference Room 3. Entering the room, they found Alice Moretti pacing like a caged beast. The door opening made Alice whirl around and her eyes grew wide as she took in not just Jillian, but Elizabeth as well. Jen quickly scurried out the door past Jillian, not looking either woman in the eye.

"I didn't expect to see both of you," Alice stated, standing behind the table, holding her bag tightly to her.

"Didn't you?" Elizabeth asked as Jillian closed the door behind them.

Alice slowly reached into her bag. Jillian's throat felt dry as her mind tried to calm itself, knowing David and Nick would be watching. The only thing that was keeping her from charging Alice was knowing that Dana would have gone over every inch of the woman and if Alice had a weapon, she would need a couple of seconds to fit it together - seconds Jillian had to get Elizabeth out of there.

Pulling out the laptop that had been requisitioned for her, Alice placed it on the table. "This belongs to you. I finished the final reports and put on some other things I had been working on."

Elizabeth slid the laptop towards Jillian, who picked it up and put it on a far away counter in the conference room. Jillian came back, standing next to Elizabeth.

Elizabeth's face softened a little. "Why did you run?"

"That's none of your concern--"

"Yes, it is," Elizabeth said, jumping on Alice's speech. "According to Jillian, you know about Torchwood."

"I would rather wish I didn't," Alice responded, clutching tight to the chair back in front of her.

"So do we," Jillian replied.

"I highly doubt they hurt you as much they have hurt me," Alice stated, running a hand through her curly hair.

"Try us," Elizabeth retorted. Elizabeth sat down. She tried to not show weakness, but Jillian knew that since the incident with the "Cleaners" years ago, Elizabeth's ankle had not healed properly and gave her problems, especially on days like today. The aliens had abducted her, beat her up, and made Elizabeth nearly abort Grace from her womb. They had been through so much; things others would never know, nor understand.

Alice pulled out a chair on the opposite side of the table and wearily sank into it. "You're probably not going to let me go unless I tell you something."

"Considering David terminated your position a week ago, we could claim you're trespassing," Elizabeth said. "But I don't want to do that. I just want to keep my family safe. You can understand that, can't you?"

Alice nodded her head. "But getting involved with Torchwood won't make that happen."

"We need answers," Jillian said, pacing the room near the door.

"All I can say is that you are better off not knowing Torchwood and staying as far away from them as possible before they do anything to you."

"They have already done *something* to us! It's because of Torchwood that we are in the mess we are in," Jillian rattled off.

"Then don't go after them," Alice pleaded.

"I'm sorry, but we want answers - we *need* answers to what happened." Elizabeth reached her hand out, laying it flat against the table.

"I can't help you there," Alice replied, swallowing hard.

"You know about Torchwood. Your mother used to work for Torchwood." Elizabeth stared the older woman down.

Alice's face paled. "How do you know that? You can't know that." Alice pushed back from the table, quickly rising.

"We have ways of finding out things, but not enough," Jillian replied, blocking off Alice's escape. "You told me to never lose my child because of Torchwood." Jillian tried to ignore Elizabeth's affronted look. Of course, she hadn't told them everything Alice had said; she still had trouble flipping it over in her head. "UNIT is trying to keep my children away because of what happened in Cardiff over twenty years ago. My twins have been held by a military organization, away from each other and away from me for two months. As a mother, I beg you to tell me what you know."

She could hear Alice's breaths growing even more shallow. "Elizabeth's kids were taken by UNIT as well. If anything else happens to our children, I don't know if either of us could be as strong as you have been."

Alice gripped the back of the chair in front of her so hard her knuckles turned white. Craning her head, Alice looked to the darkening sky. Rain kept trying to pour down in New York all morning. Alice's voice was so quiet at first, that Jillian almost didn't hear her begin speaking.

"I wasn't strong. I hated him. I had loved him all my life and I wanted to kill him. Knowing that would destroy me even more, I just walked away, not even able to look him in the eye." Alice let out a sigh that shivered through her body. "Torchwood didn't specifically kill my son, but because of how they meddled in life, I wanted to die. So many times I wanted to die, but all I could see when I closed my

eyes in thoughts of-- All I could see were his blue eyes." Alice turned back to them, tears glistening in her eyes. "I just want to leave and start my life over again, as far away from Torchwood as I could be. You've brought up too many memories for me."

"We're sorry, but--" Elizabeth's feet shifted.

"No. I can't tell you much about Torchwood," Alice said. "But it would be in the best interest of everyone you love to not find them. If Torchwood finds you, so be it; but please, don't actively seek them out. I need you to trust me on this." Alice folded her arms around her body, holding tight to herself. The woman looked so alone in the world.

Jillian shuddered to think that knowing what Torchwood was had made Alice this way. Their lives were already being torn about and they had no clue what they were dealing with. She could feel a lump forming in her throat and stepped behind Elizabeth.

Elizabeth looked up at the woman. "You know you can never work for this company again?"

"I figured as much," Alice retorted.

Elizabeth leaned back to rub her ankle and whispered to Jillian. "Kill the camera. We'll deal with David later."

Jillian ambled over towards the laptop, pulling out her PDA. She input a couple of commands and watched as the internal camera for the room showed as 'off' on her display. "Two minutes," she said to Elizabeth.

"Two minutes for what?" Alice asked, her voice edgy.

"Two minutes to talk woman to woman," Elizabeth said.

"Make that a minute and a half; David might get antsy," Jillian replied.

"Alice, it's just us in this room. No one else can listen in right now. Tell me honestly about Torchwood," Elizabeth pleaded with Alice.

"I would trust them to save the world, but at what cost? They will go for the greater good, but they will take out any individuals who stop them. They saved the world, and the children of the world, but for that to happen, my son was killed. My son was killed by his own grandfather."

Elizabeth's hands covered her face. Jillian peered down at the PDA and brought up the camera in the Main Conference Room that David and Nick had been in, catching the door closing shut.

"Less than a minute, the boys are on the move," Jillian hissed at Elizabeth.

"You're telling us the truth?" Elizabeth stared at Alice.

"Yes." Alice looked down at her own hands. "If you can, do not go after Torchwood. Don't let them know about you. Stay under everyone's radars."

"We'd like to, but UNIT has other plans," Elizabeth quipped. "What do you plan on doing?"

"Disappearing. All I wanted to do was start over again, far away from Torchwood. I guess that will never happen in my life. Even you lot..."

"You won't have to worry about Torchwood tracking you down," Elizabeth said. Jillian turned on her friend, wanting to say something, but couldn't form the words. "You will be completely wiped from our system."

"What?" Alice narrowed her eyes at Elizabeth.

"I'm the Executive Director. If you leave now and cause no more trouble for us, your records are wiped from every database we have." Elizabeth stood up by the door, opening it to reveal one of the building's security guards.

Alice looked Elizabeth up and down and then hurried around the table. She walked ahead of the guard, mouthing a 'thank you' towards Elizabeth and Jillian. As Alice hit the main hallway, David and Nick hurried towards the far end of the hall by the stairwell entrance.

"Where's she going?" David demanded.

"Wherever she can call home," Elizabeth replied. "What's going on?"

"Johnson is almost here," Nick replied. "We finally heard from her. They are fifteen minutes away. She has all four children, and no seems to have followed them."

"She held answers and you let her walk?" David looked down the hall to where Alice had disappeared into the elevator.

"I don't think she truly knows any more than we do," Jillian stated.

"She knew enough to say stay the fuck away. Like hell I am letting her walk away. She has answers," David said, pulling out his mobile phone from his pocket.

"For chrissake! Can't you be happy enough getting your children back?" Elizabeth said, hurt in her voice. She grabbed his phone out of his hands, holding it tightly to her chest.

"I want them back more than you seem to realize," David replied. "But I will do everything in my power to get my family safe. If Moretti had answers..."

"She buried them with her son 25 years ago." Elizabeth stalked past David and Nick. "Where are they bringing the children?" Elizabeth asked, looking back over her shoulder at the men.

"I've secured the loading dock on the East side of the building," Nick stated.

"Then let's go," Elizabeth said, her voice cracking. Jillian knew Elizabeth was trying to be strong. She walked past the boys as well, putting an arm across her friend's shoulder and leaning Elizabeth's head into her body. A couple of tears fell, but the majority of tears fell down both of their cheeks as they hugged their daughters to them ten minutes later.

## Chapter 8

Jillian gently brushed her fingers across Aimi's cheek, feeling her daughter's breath flutter across her skin. It warmed her body knowing her children slept safe in their beds that night - *all* her children were safe that night, for an hour ago she had gotten a call from Evie. Evie wanted to see if the kids were safe and had wanted to schedule a day to come and meet Alex and Aimi in person, and to meet Nick. Jillian felt alive again.

Silently closing the door behind her, Jillian leaned against the doorjamb, staring down the hall at the light coming from the guest bedroom. She could hear little James' voice talking over Elizabeth's. They were all together again - well, almost all of them. Samantha waited for rescue somewhere in France, as she was told to do by "Captain" Jack Jones. It was brilliant how Elizabeth had figured out how to word it, using the inside joke between Jack Jones and Nurse Owens from *The Demons of Highgate* when he pretended to be a member of the RAF.

Jillian let out a sigh, hoping that someday soon all five of them would be reunited, that hopefully Lynnae would be brought back to them.

Ambling down the dark hallway, she walked into the living room to find David watching CCTV footage from France. She caught a glimpse of a redhead and smiled. David looked up as she entered and motioned her over.

"I take it she got the note?"

"Our server was hacked four hours ago," David replied. "I wiped its trail just in case."

"How are we going to get her? UNIT will be watching over us even worse than before."

"It can't be the three of us," David replied.

Jillian picked up Nick's coat from the sofa and sat down, the jacket crumpled in her lap. Her finger ran along one cuff as she looked at the red piping along it. "Did you really mean what you said earlier?"

"I say a lot of fucking things. Which time?"

"Last night, when you basically declared war on UNIT. Do you really want to take them down?"

"With every fiber of my being," David said, turning in the chair to face her.

"I've buried enough people in my life--"

"We won't be burying any more family for a long time," David said.

"Will Johnson help us?"

"No."

"What?" Jillian looked up at him, surprised. Johnson was a one-woman take-down team in her own right.

"I mentioned it to Johnson. She said if we went to war with UNIT, she wouldn't work with us again."

"Is she going to work with UNIT?"

"She doesn't work for anyone in particular," David stated. He turned back to the computer. "I'm using her for one last job and then severing those ties."

"What's that?"

"She said she would help get Samantha back."

"How?"

"Nick volunteered to go."

"Nick..." Jillian stood up and started heading towards their bedroom, where Nick had hurried off to an hour before. "When?"

"Tonight. UNIT will still be pissed they lost the kids; they will be regrouping to figure out what to do about us. They will be too distracted. It's our only shot. He leaves in half an hour and will meet Johnson by a small airstrip outside of town."

"But...I just got my children back and now you're taking--"

"I'm not taking him and it makes the most sense! They don't want him as much as they want us."

"Are you sure about that?"

"What aren't you telling me?" David asked, craning his neck to glare at her.

"Nothing...I think." She turned back around, her hip leaning against the doorjamb. "Back to UNIT."

"I want to take them down, at least this branch. There have been some good officers. I've heard of a brigadier back in the day--" He pulled open a file on his computer. "Alistair Lethbridge-Stewart was a good guy from what I've seen. But this current crop is full of vipers who will bite off their own tails if it pleased them. We are at war. The only thing..."

"What?"

"The only thing is, I will have to put aside my research on Torchwood and what happened to us in Cardiff. I can't fight a major military organization and keep my family safe at the same time and not lose something."

"What about the money in Ortiz Industries?"

"You know as well as I do the money technically doesn't exist. Nowadays, it's all credit and agreements. One thing brought against the company and it all falls. I've been wheeling and dealing so much to provide for you guys that if we lose it, we lose all our protection. And I don't just mean against UNIT; I mean from the aliens and anything else that wants us."

"Oh," Jillian said, stepping back into the hallway. She hurried down to her bedroom and opened the door to find Nick zipping up a small duffel bag. She closed the door behind her and quickly wrapped her arms around his neck. "I love you," she whispered into the side of his neck.

Nick put his arms around her body, hugging Jillian tight. "I know. That's why I'm coming back."

"You better," she replied, her forehead leaning against his, her hair brushing his cheek.

"Nothing could keep me away, not even the infamous Torchwood."

"Something to bring you back," Jillian said as her lips sank against his. She kissed him deeply, her tongue pushing forward, darting between his lips. Her fingers ran through his hair and she held him tight. Maybe this time it would work to bring her husband back.

He finally pulled away and grabbed up his duffel. "I'll see you soon, with Samantha in tow."

With that, he exited the bedroom and hurried out of the flat. Jillian snuck back into the darkened twins' room and just listened to them breathe.

"Soon."